



THREE REASONS TO RETHINK MISSIONS

Reason No. 1: My current global mission strategy or process needs to be re-energized.

We are wide with partners and programs yet lack relationships.

Reason No. 2: My congregation is not engaged or living life on mission in their neighborhood.

Reason No. 3: I long for my community to be more effective, like the church in Acts, where believers worked together so that the needs of the marginalized were met and the church grew exponentially. (Acts 2:46-47; 6:5-7)

If any of these reasons resonate with you we can help!

The church remains the hope of the world. Churches all over the US are engaged with their communities locally in some way. They are living out the mission of Christ in tangible ways through soup kitchens, homeless shelters, tutoring programs, and day camps. But, many of those same churches are unsure of how to approach missions on a global scale.

Beyond supporting a missionary, they do not know how to engage with the locals in a way that cultivates real relationships. They end up in a position where they feel sidelined, asked only to "pay and pray" or support parachurch ministries. Where is the church itself in all this? How are they able to work through the body of Christ? When they see pictures of starving children and desperate widows in far-off countries or hear about wars, famines, epidemics, and natural disasters the problems seem too complicated to tackle. Sometimes when churches do engage, they end up hurting more than helping. Yet, they cannot shake the feeling that they were called to be more than just a funding partner.

CHURCHES OFTEN FEEL THAT SOMETHING IS MISSING. THE SAME THING THAT MAKES THEIR LOCAL MINISTRIES SO IMPACTFUL IS NOT PRESENT IN THEIR INTERNATIONAL WORK. WHAT IS IT?

Relationship. To understand what we mean by relationship and rethinking missions, we first need to think about what missions means and what it could be.

Missions means to be "sent". (Matt 28:19-20)

WHAT IF LIVING ON MISSION COULD MEAN EMPOWERING THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO BE SENT TO THEIR COMMUNITIES AND IN RETURN, WE ARE INSPIRED TO BE SENT TO OURS?

What could living missionally look like? Equipping. Inspiring. Mobilizing.

At World Orphans, years of partnering with local churches internationally, who know their communities, has taught us that transformation happens through relationship. Places like Guatemala, Haiti, Ethiopia, India, and Iraq have been transformed by the gospel through empowering local leaders.

WHAT IF LIVING LIFE ON MISSION GLOBALLY WAS NOT REALLY THAT DIFFERENT FROM HOW YOU ENGAGE YOUR NEIGHBORS OR YOUR COMMUNITY IN THE US?

What if it was possible to connect with people who already had the local knowledge, the culture, and the linguistic ability to make an impact from day one? Through the local church it is.

When you come alongside an international church through church partnership, results are powerful and transformation is imminent for their community and yours.

THREE WAYS TO RETHINK MISSIONS

1: RETHINK AND RE-ENERGIZE YOUR VETTING PROCESS.

DEFINE

Ask yourself *What matters to my church? What desires and gifts has God given us that we can use to be missional?* Define this first. Is it planting churches? Caring for vulnerable children and families? Justice for the oppressed? Demonstrating love to those living in material poverty?

CREATE

Once you have defined what is important to you and your church community, create a process for evaluating and selecting your new mission partner. You will need to develop an application that mission agencies can use to clearly state who they are, what they do, and their greatest needs. Next, leaders from the church will evaluate whether they are a good fit for the church. If there is alignment, the church's mission board should interview the mission agency to get more information on accountability, cost, and details related to the work that is done. After the interview the mission board should present their thoughts to the elders of the church. The response and next steps, depend on how the church and the mission agency wish to proceed.

COMMUNICATE

Tell the church and the community about the decision. Advocate for engagement and support within the church body. It is also important to receive regular communication from your new mission partner and to establish expectations for how often and via what method (video, letter, etc.) you will communicate. Annually, your church should continue to evaluate whether there continues to be alignment between your values as a church, God's Word, and the work that is done. This evaluation can be done with your new partner or internally.





2: RETHINK HOW TO ENGAGE AND EXCITE YOUR CONGREGATION.

Getting your church excited about missions involves a greater level of engagement. You will need a way for them to identify with and own the new ways your church is trying to live missionally. This applies to both domestic missions and international missions. One of the ways that you can accomplish this is by adopting the methods Jesus used for discipleship: equip, inspire, mobilize.

EQUIP 3

Start small. Identify three people within your church or your leadership team who desire to see God at work through missions. Look for where God is already moving. Identify areas of strength within your church that can be sources of change and transformation in your community. Educate your core group, and increase their awareness of what the church is trying to accomplish by living missionally.

INSPIRE 12

The goal of the three should be to educate and inspire twelve others within the church who are looking for ways to get involved and make an impact, helping them catch the vision too. This can be through local outreach or by planning a short-term trip to visit the marginalized.

MOBILIZE 120

Lastly, you can begin by sharing stories semi-annually with the broader church body. This could be through a "Missions Sunday" where you bring awareness, education, and ways to participate. Over time, this kind of engagement ultimately leads to community transformation.



3: RETHINK HOW TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP.

How can we be more effective like the church in Acts? In Acts, the early church worked together so that the needs of the marginalized were met and the church grew exponentially. Through our decades of history helping churches work together, we have learned many lessons about how to engage with our international brothers and sisters.

The results have been explicit: We can be more effective together than apart.

LESSONS LEARNED

"One of the most powerful lessons we have learned is that good intentions do not always equal good outcomes."¹ This lesson has taught us that it is vital to never assume we know best. Open minds, willing hearts, and ready hands allow us to be participants in God's transformative work. That lesson, along with many others, has led us to develop our church partnership model.

THE CHURCH WAS DESIGNED FOR RELATIONSHIP

Even as we seek to grow in our understanding, we know that God's church was designed for relationship. This model can help your church engage in a way that is deliberate, defined, and demonstrative. Long-term relationships in a local community coupled with local knowledge is the best way to create lasting opportunities for change. If this is true for the US church and the global church, our aim should be partnership. We should come alongside the international church to equip, inspire, and mobilize them to live missionally within their communities. By partnering your church with an international church, you can begin to multiply your impact from day one.

¹ Lederfeiter, Mary T., Elmer, Duane. *Cross-Cultural Partnerships: Navigating the Complexities of Money and Mission* (United States: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 28.

